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DELIVERED BEFORE

THE

SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS

OF BEDFORD, PA.,

JULY 4, 1844.

BY O. C. HARTLEY, ESQ.

CHAMBERSBURG, PA.

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BEDFORD, JULY 4, 1844.

TO O. C. HARTLEY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR—Allow us, in behalf of the “Volunteers” we represent, to return you our sincere thanks for the very learned, patriotic, and eloquent address you did us the kindness to deliver this day—and to ask the favor of a copy of the same for publication.

Yours Respectfully,

JAMES BOWMAN,
SAMUEL TAYLOR,
J. OTTINGER,
JOHN JORDON,
JOS. FILLER,
JOHN CESSNA,

Committee.

BEDFORD, JULY 4, 1844.

GENTLEMEN :

I have just received your polite note, requesting on behalf of the volunteers, a copy of the Address which I this day delivered at our Celebration. Fourth of July Addresses have become so trite as, generally, to be listened to from considerations of patriotism rather than pleasure. You must, therefore, have discovered something original in the address, or you should certainly be unpardonable in publishing it. You are welcome, however it may be, to what is your own. I herewith send you the copy.

Yours, Respectfully,

O. C. HARTLEY.

TO MESSRS. JAMES BOWMAN, SAMUEL TAYLOR, and others.

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SOLDIERS AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

The celebration of the ruling events in a Nation's history holds up to view the spirit and figure of the age. It furnishes a palpable shape to the otherwise invisible activity and force with which a people assume a character and preserve it. The proverbs of a Nation and the songs of a Nation are said, correctly enough, to exhibit national peculiarity. But they are peculiarities in small things. It is the Anniversaries to which we must look to find exhibitions of distinctness of nationality in those great matters which do not grow out as merely minute branches of the ruling idea, but are the germ itself of the whole social and political growth. It is the beauty and truth, too, of these anniversaries that they are wholly without object—that is, object distinct from themselves. It is not to perpetuate the memory of the defeat of British Arms in America, by undisciplined militia-men, that we are assembled here to-day. Its effect is not to keep open the wounds inflicted by Old England in our childhood, while yet we were unarmed and unskilled. But it is the spontaneous action of the same spirit which produced the Declaration of Independence, bursting forth in the form of a memento of the glorious day on which it received

a shape and a name in the world. It is no Holyday decreed by Church or State. Its celebration is ensured by no Society or association to effect unity of action. No!—It is the legitimate power of our National character and soul, called into action by the associations connected with the day on which we are assembled. Considered in this light, what a grand and imposing spectacle does this nation upon this day present. From the St John's to the Sabine, from the wharves of the Atlantic far into the wilds of the western forests, they are assembled—not to solemnize the canonization of a saint, nor to celebrate the birth of any secular Hero, but, forced by the associations connected with the day, associations which involve national existence, our peculiar character and the new idea upon which rests our social fabric, and from which is to rise the superstructures of future nations—into one universal jubilee of soul and spirit. It is not a something got up from without, like a show or bazaar—it is the voice of—'76 speaking from within. To-day the richest incense of soul ascends from the altar of every heart in this wide land, up to the Deity, that has smiled upon our birth and protected our Infancy. The odor of our adoration is like the fragrance of the wild flowers which inhabit our land, it is new—it is the natural effusion of our life, and like nothing that the world has ever known.

In youth there is something loveable—whether it be the youth of a nation or of an individual. But

this must be a youth such as a nation and a man can pass but once. It must be the entering of a new soul, or the fresh individualization of a new thought which has power over and through a half world of mind. How beautiful is even Greece in her first years, cast as she was in childhood amongst so barbarous company! How loveable was Rome in her early days, when appearing in the dress of affection cast around her by her Virgil and Livy! But as a pure and holy spirit, by its presence, deprives evil ones of their disguise, how hag-like they appear, when compared to the young, pure, and holy spirit which has bounded from the brain of the Deity of the Western Hemisphere upon our loved land of the States! How natural is it, that the embodied spirit should remember the day of its birth! —How unnatural would it not be, if it should not, at least while yet so young, give itself a holy day, leave the post to which it has advanced, and return for a single twenty four hours and call up, by memory's magic-mirror, the images of the first years of its life, crowned, as they are, with magnolia and laurel wreaths, won even so early in life, by the asylum spirit of Penn, and of Williams, and by the man-spirit of Bunker Hill and Yorktown! This is the anniversary of that fourth of July, of that birth day, of that centre of a congeries of national affections, which, as the grove and fountain with their singing birds, we shall delight to visit once a year.

till the end is accomplished, the impulse exhausted. And what a delightful pilgrimage of spirit and love does it not offer! All the waters which flow through and refresh our social system, upon this day, return to the fountain head and receive a new impulse, teeming with fresh efficacy to heal and correct, what, through the whole past year, they may have failed to preserve in highest health. How sweet is memory where it presents nothing we cannot but love and dwell upon with high-souled satisfaction!

Drawn together to day by a retro-attractive power of feeling, let us exalt our feeling into perspicuity of thought, and consider the origin of this nation, and afterwards the end of it. By our origin, I mean not the races and stocks from which we are descended, for then, as a nation, we should have many origins which is contrary to the nature of things—and besides, we should then inevitably be a disconnected collection—a tin rattle in the hands of mother nature, to divert her petulant children on the other side of the Atlantic. We are one people in mind, in spirit, in character altogether, and our origin is one. By our origin, I mean the source of the difference between us and the nations from which we are descended. It is that which is the origin of our national character; and it is the peculiarity of our national character as it develops a new advance-post, or position in the march of mind, which claims for us one origin as the descendants of our ancestors.

and another as the ancestors of our descendants—or the new corner stone of an Anti-Babylon. It was the curse of man at one time, for his presumption and self-sufficiency, to be confounded in tongue, so that each came instantly not to understand the speech of his next hand man. It is the blessing of this age and nation, that now, and here, that curse is being withdrawn. From every land to which the different languages drove them, come architects not of Babylon, but of an Anti-Babylon—of a National mind and character, which, with the blessing of Heaven, shall exalt man further into the clouds than the heathen ever dreamed of.

When Columbus discovered America, the Kings of Europe were in rare quarters. It was at the exact period when the spirit of that age reached the summit of its ascent. It was the age of Kings—of the spirit of one-man-worship—the Lilliputian age of the last eighteen centuries. Knights, in full panoply of metal, stuck pins into Saracens. The Saracens were the Gulliver of the time. Just when the stalwart knight was performing his most heroic deeds, he was the poorest spirited, most ignorant, little, contracted thing imaginable. Like terriers, they were hissed upon each other by masters whom they recognized by a sort of instinct. The whole category of man's rights and duties, that which above all exalts him above all nature around him, was an Eureka which had not then been discovered.

Through the whole sphere of mind and things, this King-spirit had its highway, Nature received a dress from it. All Europe was robed in its vestments. There stood the palace with its turrets in the clouds, and its spacious and commodious apartments—its baths, its studs, its kennels, its rookery, its park, its forest, and the whole catalogue of appendages and appurtenances of one man power. While here, at an humble distance, the land is spotted with huts and habitations which might be demolished, and leave no ruins. Here toiled the cooks—there feasted the Gourmand—the dish was men's rights—he devoured them all.

This was the situation of men when the Genoese Navigator opened up a new field, a new land where there were no palaces but of nature's own building. Among the middle class of men in Europe, were many spirits who felt the deprivation of their rights. With what joy they received the intelligence of the success of Columbus' visionary expedition can scarcely be imagined. Immediately they forsook the old world and came over to the new. In no respect were the rights of man being more violated than in that of religion and conscience. Hence came men, for conscience sake. In numbers they came, every one to escape some restriction or deprivation of right, which was most irksome to himself. Here lies the origin of our national form and spirit. Here is the first appearance of the germ of our peculiar charac-

ter. In three centuries it ripened into the famous declaration of “-’76”—“all men are born free and equal.”—Escaped from such a state of things in Europe, mind took a direction immediately opposite. It developed that which was but a spiritual repugnancy to the existing order of things, into an opposite order. This it is—the idea that “all men are born free and equal”—which lies at the bottom of every difference between this nation and all others of the civilized world. This then is our origin—that “all men are born free and equal,” that man as the pride of the universe and the image of God, has a dignity which is repulsive to all restraint, except the laws which God gave him for his conduct and life. The discovery of that idea is our origin—our institutions embody it.

The end of our Republic next demands our attention. In the middle ages, the world of mind presented a singular aspect. The nations of Europe turned their faces to the East and their backs to the West, and thus travelled backwards. Little wonder is it, if their progress was slow. The Pilgrim took his staff, girded up his loins and turned his back upon the setting sun, and set out for the sepulchre of Christ. The Monarch called his Knights and vassals, and with steel-clad front measured his march towards the Holy Land. But things are changed now. The Middle Ages are gone, and with them went darkness. The face is turned to-

wards the Occident. The Pilgrim girds him for a pilgrimage, not to the scenes of vain greatness, the sepulchre of nations and of Christ, but towards the birth-place of a new greatness, and of the spirit of Christ. Pilgrims once, they are a nation now : but yet the end is far before them.

The progress of nations is like the progress of men. When a genius has developed all his powers as far as they can be developed under the circumstances in which he is placed, he dies and his ashes, like decaying crops, enrich the luxuriance of the next. The Genius born after him, is the exponent of the same idea, somewhat exalted and sent by a fresh impulse. The one, however, cannot begin where the other left off. There must be a new birth, a new infancy. And it is not until he has reached maturity, that the difference between the new and the old appears—it is then the idea receives extension—and again the genius dies. Just so it is with nations. When the force which set a change in motion is exhausted, the State falls to the earth like Actæus to gain a new impulse. The American Revolution was an exposition of the highest thought that ever had place in the mind of a whole people. But the impulse, like the vitality of man, becomes exhausted—and then follows a Revolution which imparts the required force. But revolutions are not the death of nations—far from it. They are evidence of the highest life. A Revolution is a reac-

tion. Where you see no revolutions, the mind is next thing to dead—it is torpid. Through a long winter our trees are barren and changeless. They are long in putting forth buds, but the buds are soon blossoms, and the blossoms are soon fruit. So it is with men. The child is long in coming to the years of thought, and he travels slow and tediously. But when he approaches the season of his prime, he moves with metoric rapidity. And, as nations approach the consummation of the best social system, they demand more frequent revolutions, by which they are made equal in form to the change which has taken place in spirit. History tells not of a revolution in China. It tells of no advance there. Revolutions, then, we must anticipate—let our only object be that they may be bloodless. There is little danger indeed of any Revolutions here being sanguinary. The old spirit—the one-man spirit is too weak to effect the shedding of blood in its favor. In many phenomena the observers of things profess to see the portents of the destruction of this Republic. Some behold it in the extension of our territorial limits—others in the grant of the rights of free-men to all who come among us.—But ours is no pent up Utica. We are not a whiff of tow that, when extended, breaks asunder. Like our own huge forest-trees, as we extend our branches, our foliage thickens, our shade deepens, our whole life increases, and the life-inspiring sap, none the less

for the vastness of our proportions, filters through every vein upon our utmost extremities. It is in this we differ again from Greece and Rome. Athens, with her exclusive right of citizenship, what was she? A mongrel thing—a body of free individuals erecting themselves into a tyrant-nation. How absurd the idea—how untrue the spirit—it could not stand—all such contractions, from the laws of nature, destroy themselves. Rome, what was she? Athens was but a pantomime. Rome was the full, bold, and whole realization of the age. Where were the equal rights of men—where was the dignity of man? In a Roman citizen. It was not the earth, the wide spread, beautiful earth, that was made to be enjoyed by a free and happy people, it was Rome, Rome, Rome. “I am,” cried Verres, “a Roman citizen.” “I am,” cried our oppressed ancestor, “a man.” How expressive of the difference between this Republic and that? The one is the spirit of a pent up Utica, the other the free, unbounded spirit of the world. Let our own thirteen be the heart of a system which shall grow up around it and be nourished from the purifying fountain of its spirit, until in one we extend from sea to sea, and from the Isthmus to the Straits. It all may be revolutionized, but that one jot or tittle of the spirit of liberty shall be destroyed—’tis fool-folly, to think of it.

With such a prospect before you, to every pilgrim from oppression to this new holy land, extend

your hands. Lead them to the young, the pure, the sublime, the beautiful west, and show them there, not the sepulchre of Christ, but his spirit, his grandeur, his glory. Oh for the memory's sake of our great hearted heroes, act not the Saracen's part in this : attempt not to hinder the pilgrim from seeing and touching this new altar, from worshipping at this last approved shrine of the Infinite. Examine the Kooran which the prophets of '76 have transmitted to you. You will find there a spirit as general and wide reaching as the spirit of Holy-Writ. "All men are born free and equal," cries the father of the Declaration. "All men are born free and equal," resounds from every bosom from Maine to Georgia. Our forests take up the cry. The redmen of the Mississippi echo it : and it dies away in the heavy scamper of the Bison and wild horse as they bound through the western prairies. Oh that men's souls would always be open, large and all embracing ; that there were no contracted spirits, who, while they climb the bread fruit tree, plant spikes in the trunk to prevent others from ascending to enjoy with them the gifts of God.

The fact is, one prominent feature in this great 19th century is quackery. Our stump and bar-room statesmen see in every movement of a different party or sect, a traitorous attempt upon our constitution and Liberty ! No one doubts there are many signs of change — and this very quackery is one of them.

But are our wise men yet to learn that the changes of mind and spirit are regulated by laws as certain and fixed as are the changes of matter—the phenomena of nature. Who ever dreams of taking measures to prevent a rain when he observes it descend the mountain, although an hundred acres of meadow lie all freshly mown. He would be guilty of no greater folly than the man who attempts to prolong the present shape of this Government by restricting its territory, or men's rights of citizenship. The apple may be knocked by an ardent boy, a few days before it would fall from its own ripeness, but nevertheless, the fruit is perfect, and the seeds are ready to take root and grow again.

It is the nature of government to assume a form, and preserve it for years, without a change. It is the nature of it, too, that when the change takes place, it must be sudden. This we call revolution. During the interval, all of the materials for the change are being prepared—just as the painter arranges his colors before he commences his work. And as different as is the picture upon the canvass from the paints in the vases, so different is the established change from the forces which produced it. England may contain all the colors to paint a beautiful Republic—but, by some misfortune, they are all cast together into the same vase, with others, too, that ought not to be there. Revolutions, there, are prevented by an arbitrary power of which we here know nothing. Ours come as the laws of reason and all things

direct. What egregious folly then for men to speak of endangering our liberties. This Republic is not to be saved from ruin by one man or set of men—nor is it to be destroyed by another. Was it Cæsar who destroyed the Roman Republic? The spirit of the Roman Republic was dead and buried before Cæsar had a name.

But while the ancient Republics perished entirely, ours can only change betimes—always endeavoring to make our institutions the more exactly contain the spirit of the Revolution. The reason is this. The essence of those Republics was a lie; that their citizens only were born free and equal. The essence of ours is truth—"That all men are born free and equal." This is the rock, that is the sand.

True it is, that constantly differences are springing up between different parts of the union—differences in which some profess to see the incipient labors of dissolution. In a dissolution some behold an object of desire. Others deprecate it. We lament and deplore every scath or scar the union receives. A dissolution of our union! The first step towards the division of this famous Republic of twenty six states into twenty six little Democratic animalculæ. Who does not know that the further we extend our arms of political brotherhood, the higher, the nobler is the representation of the idea which determines our character. Imagine one mighty Republic stretching

from Beehring Straits to the Isthmus of Darien ! With what an overwhelming force would it not bring home the conviction to all minds, that "all men are born free and equal." This is the object and end of this Republic. To develope the idea in which it had its origin. Turn the picture and view it all in the shape of small States. How sorry the contrast !—"All men are born free and equal ?" These small voices only say, men born with in our boundaries are "free and equal." The great Republic is an original of the 19th century—the small states would be but the repetition of the Grecian, the Italian, the German. They differ from them now in their best quality, while they are members of the union—but sever them, and the one man spirit of Europe would be in upon them in an half century. I have shown the origin of this Republic—I have shown the end and object of it—which is to develope the idea that "all men are born free and equal," by receiving all men from all lands, and by extending itself over the North American Continent. The effects of disunion, supposing it possible, would plainly be the defeat of this end.—But there can be no disunion. Even if the union should be divided in this first half of the present century, it cannot remain divided. Of the annihilation of our Spirit Republic I have not the slightest fear. The union may be scattered in fragments from New Brunswick to Texas, but from the wreck will rise a figure more

beautiful than the Goddess of Love upon the Ocean. To suppose a permanent dismemberment, you must take for granted the extinction of the spirit of—'76. They are incompatible.

But the extinction of that spirit would be a retreat in the march of mind. So that if it is the destiny of man to advance towards the object of his existence, this Republic will forever remain one and undivided. It will extend from sea to sea, from the Isthmus to the Straits. And after all, this is not so visionary as some, (even while they cherish the idea of it,) may suppose. How large is this Republic now? It is but a fortnight's journey in length, and scarce so great in width. The same spirit which prompts this union of all the free, sets every man to work—to work for himself. This is another peculiar feature of our times—every man works for himself. Incited from indifference by an object and a hope, men have been inventing labor-saving machines and approximating distant points, until they have almost nothing to do and no place to go to. Who can tell how long it will require in the next century to travel across our country from the Atlantic to the Pacific! It is time that makes territory too large. Thus we can see that this spirit contains within itself the assurance of its own health and growth. While it would inspire an union of all the free, it makes it possible by overcoming the obstacle of distance of space. With such an origin

and object, how great and glorious must our Republic be ! To bring about an union of all the free, until the stars upon our striped banner shall rival in number the stars of Heaven ! Yes, though treason has been openly avowed in our Legislative Halls, and the Capitol is rank with plots and schemes of self-aggrandizement, the destiny of this Republic is over all—the fallen and mangled body of the traitor, and the the unmarbled grave of the mountebank ! But, for all that, our Flag Staff may be shot away, our musicians may lie dead upon the earth, our walls may be scaled, our cannon spiked, and our wives and children may be hid in the woods and caves—Then, Soldiers, will be the time to try men's souls again—then shall come a second '76—and you shall be able to show whether this is all a mockery or a real manifestation !

Upon your fidelity and courage it will depend whether it shall be destruction or Revolution—whether the arrival of William the Conqueror or the flight of James the 2d. But we need no prophets to tell us how it shall be. The laws of mind have already determined it. From the severest convulsions our system shall spring up again, clear, sparkling and bright, as the spray that dances in the sun, above the chafed waters. So our holydays shall increase, and we shall have a calendar of our own. In that calendar will be enrolled the names of those who have done best their

duty to their country. With Washington at the head—no one shall be forgotten down to the honest privates who refused the gold of the English spy. Nor shall Arnold be forgotten—his day shall be every eclipse. As yet he stands alone, and he is entitled to them all. May no one disturb his solitude. Thus shall the patriots be remembered to be loved—and the traitors to be despised. And when at last the world shall be civilized and revolutionized after our fashion, this 4th of July shall be the great festival of all, as the day on which was first proclaimed, in a nation's voice, the maxim and national proverb—“*all men are born free and equal.*”

N O T E.

Lest I should be misunderstood, and should be suspected of being in favor of the incorporation of Guatemala in her present social and political condition, and of Texas in violation of National faith, I will add, that, as any one must perceive who reads the text carefully, I consider the object of this Republic yet far in the distance; that it will not have been accomplished before Texas, Mexico and the whole continent shall have been peopled with men as enlightened in politics, as liberal in spirit, and as capable of enjoying civil liberty, as are the choice of our own citizens. The day and address having had no connection with party politics, I should not have added this small protest, had it not been that every thing now-a-days is viewed politically, and I might, altho' reasoning entirely on general principles, be accused of being in favor of the immediate annexation of Botany Bay.





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